

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BUJUMB 00186 270747Z

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

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FM AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4228

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY KIGALI

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUJUMBURA 0186

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, BY, OAU

SUBJECT: PREPARATIONS FOR OAU COUNCIL OF MINISTERS CONFERENCE

1. FONMIN ARTEMON SIMBANANIYE, WHO IS PRESIDENT OF THE 22ND SESSION OF OAU COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, DEPARTED BUJUMBURA FOR LAGOS MARCH 23, ACCOMPANIED BY BURUNDI'S AMBASSADORS IN ADDIS ABABA AND KINSHASA AND THREE OTHER BURUNDI OFFICIALS. ACCORDING TO BURUNDI MEDIA HE IS TO MEET THERE WITH SECRETARY GENERAL EKANGAKI AND THEN REPORT TO GENERAL GOWON IN LATTER'S CAPACITY AS PRESIDENT OF OAU, IN PREPARATION FOR MINISTERS CONFERENCE NOW SCHEDULED FOR KAMPALA APRIL 1-4. MEDIA IMPLIED THAT IMPORTANT PART OF THE REPORT WOULD BE A VERY OPTIMISTIC INTERPRETATION OF RECENT EVENTS IN PORTUGAL AND WHITE-DOMINATED SOUTHERN AFRICA. IN APPARENT EDITORIAL COMMENT, MEDIA DECLARED: "THE DECLARATION OF THE CAPTAINS (IN PORTUGAL) WILL LEAD TO COLLAPSE OF LISBON'S COLONIALIST REGIME...THE HOUR OF VICTORY HAS STRUCK*" SIMBANANIYE IS ALSO CARRYING A MESSAGE TO GOWON FROM BURUNDI PRESIDENT MICOMBERO.

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PAGE 02 BUJUMB 00186 270747Z

2. SIMBANANIYE HAS ESTABLISHED A NATIONAL OAU COMMITTEE

COMPOSED OF HIMSELF, MINEDUCATION GILLES BIMAZUBUTE;
MINCOMMUNICATIONS MELCHIOR BWAKIRA; PROCUREUR GENERAL CYRILLE
NZOHABONAYO; FOREIGN MINISTRY'S DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR
POLITICAL AFFAIRS, FELIX MAGENGÉ; DONATIEN BIHUTE, BURUNDI
AMBASSADOR IN KINSHASA; ANDRE YANDA, BURUNDI AMBASSADOR IN
DAR ES SALAAM; DIRECTORS GENERAL AT THE PRESIDENCY FOR
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND FOR CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC
AFFAIRS AND THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF REGIDESO, BURUNDI'S
ELECTRICITY AND WATER UTILITY. COMMITTEE IS TO ASSIST
SIMBANANIYE IN CARRYING OUT HIS TASK AS PRESIDENT OF COUNCIL
OF MINISTERS.

3. AT MINISTERS CONFERENCE BIMAZUBUTE IS TO REPRESENT
BURUNDI ON THE FIRST COMMITTEE, BWAKIRA ON THE TECHNICAL AND
SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE AND NZOHABONAYO ON THE POLITICAL
COMMITTEE. BIMAZUBUTE IS CAPABLE, THOUGH HE CAN BE TOUCHY,
PARTICULARLY TOWARD WESTERNERS. BWAKIRA WAS FORMERLY DIRECTOR
GENERAL OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND SHOULD HANDLE HIMSELF QUIETLY
AND COMPETENTLY. NZOHABONAYO RECENTLY LEFT OFFICE OF
PRESIDENT TO TAKE PRESENT POSITION; HIS REPUTATION INCLUDES
HAVING BEEN ONE OF THE MAINSPRINGS OF ANTI-HUTU REPRESSION OF
1972.

4. COMMENT: SIMBANANIYE SEEMS CLEARLY TO BE REVELLING IN HIS
POSITION AS PRESIDENT OF OAU COUNCIL OF MINISTERS. HIS
ELECTION HAS BEEN PRESENTED HERE AS EVIDENCE THAT OTHER
AFRICANS HOLD BURUNDI IN HIGH REGARD AND BOTH IT AND
PREPARATIONS FOR CONTINUATION OF CONFERENCE BEING USED TO GIVE
IMPRESSION THAT BURUNDI, AND SPECIFICALLY SIMBANANIYE, CARRY
WEIGHT ON AFRICAN SCENE.
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